



NEWS RELEASE

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Allegheny River Lock and Dam 6 closed this weekend due to maintenance issues

PITTSBURGH - The US Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District is alerting boaters, tow vessels and riverside businesses that unexpected maintenance issues at Allegheny River Lock and Dam 6 near Clinton, Pa. will close service at the lock through at least Saturday evening. Maintenance crews are working to resolve the issue as quickly as possible but may not have the problem fixed this weekend.

Please follow the district at www.facebook.com/PittsburghUSACE or www.twitter.com/PittsburghUSACE to receive timely updates on the lock service status.

Maintenance crews were on schedule to finish planned repairs when they discovered a cracked component on a hydraulic line while installing an electric pump. The line operates valves that empty and fill the lock chamber. Welders and machinists are fabricating the part.

“Unfortunately we can’t just pull parts off the shelf for these eighty-year-old locks,” said Dave Sneberger, the district’s navigation chief. “If we don’t fix it, the line could blow out and we’d have an oil leak.”

The district has scant funds to repair unexpected maintenance breakdowns at the aging, Depression-era Allegheny River navigation facilities. That situation will worsen next year. Service reductions are anticipated with the passage of the President’s Fiscal Year 2012 budget which would cut funding for operation and maintenance of the Allegheny River navigation system in half, from the President’s FY11 budget of \$8.4 million to \$4 million in FY12. Staffing at the locks will be reduced from 43 people to 25.

The district is currently finishing out this year’s maintenance cycle on the Allegheny River, which constitutes the last scheduled repairs for the facilities into the near future. Should Allegheny River lock machinery or components fail in Fiscal Year 2012 – which begins Oct. 1 -- the district will not have the funds to fix the issue unless it presents a safety or public health hazard.

The necessary reductions in service will keep six of eight locks open to recreational traffic while eliminating service for pleasure boaters at the two uppermost locks. Commercial traffic will have access to all locks, some by appointment, and hours at the first three locks will drop from 24-hour service to two 8-hour shifts.

Additional lockage hours for special events will be considered on a case by case basis.

The remaining hours of operation until Sept. 30 may be viewed at <http://www.lrp.usace.army.mil/or/or-f/Documents/Navs2011/nav11-04.pdf>

More information on the Allegheny River Initiative – the district’s service reduction plan for operating the Allegheny River system in FY12, may be viewed at: http://www.lrp.usace.army.mil/nav/AR_svc_red.htm

The President’s fiscal year 2012 (FY12) budget focuses on directing funds to programs that provide the highest return on investment. To accomplish this, federal agencies were required to identify low-priority programs for either elimination or a 50 percent reduction in budget.

Nationally, the President’s FY12 budget provides \$76 million for the Corps' low use navigation projects compared to FY11’s \$140 million.

For its navigation program, the Corps of Engineers identified projects with low commercial use. Locally, the Pittsburgh District’s Allegheny River system was identified as a low commercial-use system.

The Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh operates and maintains the oldest, largest and most fatigued navigation system in the Corps’ inland waterways system. It also operates 16 multi-purpose reservoirs to reduce flooding to downstream communities, to provide flows to offset pollutants, to provide downstream and in-lake recreation, and to sustain river levels for navigation. District is currently providing up to seventy percent of the flows past the Point of Pittsburgh as the area experiences drier than normal conditions, especially within the Allegheny River basin.

For media inquiries, contact the Public Affairs Office at 412-395-7500 or email: celrp-pa@usace.army.mil. To view comments submitted, lock statistics and other information on the Allegheny River Service Reduction, please visit: www.lrp.usace.army.mil